DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 077 462 HE 004 295

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TITLE Degree Plans of Entering Freshmen at University of South Carolina.
INSTITUTION South Carolina Univ., Columbia. Div. of Student Affairs.
PUB DATE 10 May 73
NOTE 6p.; Research Notes No. 14-73

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; *Academic Aspiration; *College Freshmen; *Degrees (Titles); *Higher Education; Research; Research Projects; *Student Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *University of South Carolina

ABSTRACT

To assess the degree plans of entering freshmen at the University of South Carolina (U.S.C.), a questionnaire prepared by the American Council on Education was administered to incoming freshmen at U.S.C. and 527 other institutions of higher education during summer and fall orientation 1972. The resulting summary data included information on entering freshmen at the U.S.C. and weighted normative data based on questionnaire results from 42 participating universities. The first part of this report examines the higher education plans of U.S.C. freshmen for the years 1968, 1970, and 1972 and compares them to the national university norms for the corresponding time periods. An analysis by sex is presented for the U.S.C. freshmen classes of 1971 and 1972 and the corresponding national university norms. Results indicate U.S.C. entering freshmen plan to pursue graduate and professional degrees less frequently than their national counterparts, law degree plans represented the only area in which U.S.C. freshmen exceeded the national norms, U.S.C. female freshmen were more likely to seek nonprofessional graduate degrees than were male freshmen, and U.S.C. male freshmen were likely to seek professional degrees than were U.S.C. female freshmen. (MJM)

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ED 077462

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Division of Student Affairs

Subject: Degree Plans of Entering Freshmen at University of South Carolina

Research Notes No. 14-73 May 10, 1973

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HE 004 365

Division of Student Affairs

Research Notes
No. 14-73

May 10, 1973

SUBJECT: Degree Plans of Entering Freshmen at the University of South Carolina

Nature and Scope of the Study:

During summer and fall orientation of 1972, a questionnaire prepared by the American Council on Education was administered to the incoming freshmen at the University of South Carolina and 527 other institutions of higher education, including two-year colleges, four-year colleges and universities. The resulting summary data on entering freshmen included information on the entering freshmen at the University of South Carolina and weighted normative data based on questionnaire results from the forty-two participating universities. Similar data were also available for the freshmen classes of previous years.

The following is part of a series of reports drawn from analyses of these data. This report focuses on the item in the questionnaire in which the student was asked to indicate the "highest degree planned." The first part of this report examines the higher education plans of U.S.C. freshmen for the years 1968, 1970, and 1972 and compares them to the national university norms for the corresponding time periods. Secondly, an analysis by sex is presented for the USC freshmen classes of 1971 and 1972 and the corresponding national university norms. The report concludes by summarizing the chief findings of the questionnaire responses.

Table 1. Degree Plans of U.S.C. Entering Freshmen and National University Norms for 1968, 1970, and 1972.

	University of South Carolina			National University Norms		
Highest Degree Planned	1968	1970	1972	1968	1970	1972
None	2.4	0.5	0.7	2.3	0.7	1.1
Associate	7.0	6.8	3.9	1.6	1.8	1.1
Bachelors	46.9	44.4	43.6	37.9	35.6	38.4
Masters	25.6	26.2	23.6	33.7	33.0	27.7
PhD or EdD	9.8	9.9	9.7	13.7	13.6	11.5
Md., DDM, or DVM	4.6	5.3	8.6	7.0	8.4	12.3
LLB or JD	2.9	5.9	8.4	2.3	5.7	6.7
Other Post Baccalaureate	0.7	.9	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.2

Comments:

1. The cumulative percentage of U.S.C. entering freshmen indicating a bachelor's degree or below as the highest degree planned was 48.2%, while the corresponding national percentage was 40.6%.

2. The cumulative percentage of U.S.C. freshmen designating a master's degree or above as the highest degree planned was 51.8% in 1972. This figure has increased by 8.1% since 1968. The national data which has remained relatively constant over the years studied revealed that 59.4% of 1972 incoming freshmen desired a master's degree or above.

3. The only major degree area in which the percentage of U.S.C. freshmen exceeded the national norm is law (LLB or JD). The percentage of U.S.C. students seeking law degrees has exceeded national norms in each of the years studied.

4. The percentage of U.S.C. entering freshmen seeking medical degrees including dentistry and veterinary medicine has nearly doubled between 1968 and 1972. Despite this increase U.S.C. freshmen continue to lag behind the national norms by 3.7%.

5. The percentage of U.S.C. freshmen indicating a PhD. or EdD. degree as the highest degree planned has remained about the same over the 4-year period (1968-1972). In 1968, 9.8% indicated plans for obtaining a PhD. or EdD, while 9.7% indicated such plans in 1972. The national norm reflects a decrease from 13.7% in 1968 to 11.5% in 1972.

Table 2. Degree Plans by Sex for U.S.C. Entering Freshmen and National University Norms for 1971 and 1972.

	USC MALE FRESHMEN				USC FEMALE FRESHMEN			
	USC Percent		Nat. Percent		USC Percent		Nat. Percent	
Highest Degree Planned	1971	1972	1971	1972	1971	1972	1971	1972
None	2.8	0.8	3.1	1.0	1.7	0.5	2.9	1.2
Associate	2.3	0.9	0.8	0.6	13.5	7.9	1.7	1.6
Bachelors	41.2	40.1	31.6	31.5	49.8	48.5	48.6	46.7
Masters	20.7	20.5	28.3	26.1	23.3	27.9	30.3	29.7
PhD or EdD	11.2	10.9	14.1	13.7	6.7	8.1	7.9	8.8
MD, DDS, or DVM	8.7	12.8	12.4	16.2	2.9	2.9	4.9	7.6
LLB or JD	12.0	12.1	8.2	9.7	1.4	3.5	1.9	3.1
Other Post Baccalaureate	1.2	1.1	1.5	1.3	0.6	0.8	1.7	1.2

1. Male U.S.C. freshmen planned to undertake graduate-level work more frequently than did female U.S.C. freshmen students, as is the case at the national level. The relative increase in percentage planning graduate studies from 1971 to 1972, however, was 3.6% for U.S.C. males and 8.3% for U.S.C. females. Nearly all of the male increase was reflected in the percent seeking medical degrees. The female increase is attributed to master's, doctoral and law degree plans.

2. A relatively high percentage of female freshmen at U.S.C. indicated the associate degree as the highest planned. 7.9% of U.S.C. female freshmen indicated plans for an associate degree while only 1.6% of the female freshmen in the national averages indicated plans for this degree. These variations are attributed to the fact that U.S.C.'s College of General Studies is unique in its offerings of associate degree programs.

3. Both male and female freshmen at U.S.C. planned to pursue graduate work less frequently than their national counterparts. Female freshmen, however, were on the average proportionately closer to the national norms than were the males.

4. Females at U.S.C. were more apt to be planning non-professional graduate study than were males in 1972. The percentage of U.S.C. female freshmen designating a master's or PhD. degree as the highest planned was 36.0%, while the percentage of U.S.C. male freshmen desiring the same degree was 31.4%.

5. The percentage of U.S.C. male freshmen planning a medical or law degree was approximately 4 times higher than the percentage of female freshmen desiring the same degrees. The cumulative percentage for U.S.C. male freshmen desiring medical or law degrees was 24.9% while only 6.4% of U.S.C. female freshmen indicated plans for these same degrees.

Conclusions:

1. U.S.C. entering freshmen plan to pursue graduate and professional degrees less frequently than their national counterparts. However, the percentage of U.S.C. freshmen planning to seek advanced degrees has increased about 8% during the past 5 years while the national normative data indicates an increase of only 1%.

2. Law degree plans represented the only area in which U.S.C. freshmen exceeded the national norms.

3. U.S.C. female freshmen were more likely to seek non-professional graduate degrees (Master's and PhD) than were the male freshmen.

4. U.S.C. male freshmen were more likely to seek professional degrees (M.D., D.V.M., D.D.S., L.L.B., or J.D.) than were U.S.C. female freshmen.